

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1050

By Southerland

A RESOLUTION to recognize Dr. Robert Miller on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should honor those citizens who have worked with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their careers; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable individual is the internationally renowned research innovator Dr. Robert Miller, who formally retired in 2021 after an illustrious forty-year career as a tobacco breeder and geneticist; and

WHEREAS, long associated with University of Tennessee (UT) AgResearch, Dr. Miller developed disease-resistant burley and dark fired-cured tobacco varieties that benefited Tennessee producers as well as producers throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, for much of his career with UT AgResearch, Dr. Robert Miller was based at the former University of Tennessee Tobacco Experiment Station on East Allens Bridge Road in Greeneville; and

WHEREAS, a Kentucky native, Dr. Miller came to Greeneville in 1982 and began work on a line of burley that would be released four years later as TN 86, which was the first tobacco variety of any type to have resistance to tobacco poty-viruses; as evidence of its importance, TN 86 is one of only two varieties celebrated in the Chinese Tobacco Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, the second variety Dr. Miller developed was TN 90, the first burley variety to have resistance to seven diseases; at one time, TN 90 was the most widely grown burley in the world; and

WHEREAS, based on seed sales, approximately seventy-five to eighty-five percent of burley and twenty-five to thirty percent of dark tobacco crops in the United States utilize varieties developed by Dr. Robert Miller; and

WHEREAS, many of the varieties Dr. Miller developed also have modified chemistry that significantly decreases harmful compounds in tobacco products; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Robert Miller grew up on a tobacco farm near London, Kentucky, and received his undergraduate degree in chemistry and biology at Berea College. He received his Ph.D. in agronomy from the University of Kentucky in 1980; and

WHEREAS, when UT and the University of Kentucky (UK) merged their tobacco breeding programs in 1999, Dr. Miller was named as principal investigator. He held the titles of research professor of plant sciences at UT and professor of plant and soils sciences at UK; the joint UT-UK program he headed released eleven burley and nine dark disease-resistant tobacco varieties that are widely grown throughout Kentucky and Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, duly honored throughout his career, Dr. Robert Miller is the recipient of the Philip Morris USA Award for Distinguished Achievement in Tobacco Science, the Burley Tobacco Co-op Leadership Award, the UTIA Research Impact Award, the UTIA Epsilon Sigma Phi State Team Award, the Murray State University Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award, and the J.W. Massengill Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award; and

WHEREAS, another honor is the newly established Robert and Karen Miller Outstanding Graduate Student Awards established within UT AgResearch; the annual awards will recognize one master's degree student and one Ph.D. student in the UT Herbert College of Agriculture and UT AgResearch who have demonstrated valuable contributions to science and engineering, such as a new discovery, publication, or presentation; and

WHEREAS, his many professional accomplishments aside, Dr. Robert Miller is perhaps proudest of the love and support he shares with his wife, Karen Miller, who taught music in the Greeneville City Schools system for sixteen years; the Millers are faithful members of First Baptist Church in Greeneville, where they have served in countless ways over the years; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Dr. Miller has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the respect and admiration of his colleagues and community alike, and he should be recognized on this special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we extend to Dr. Robert Miller our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement, offering our deepest gratitude for his distinguished service to Tennessee and wishing him every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.